receive slices of bread covered with jam, lard or honey. 000

The technical aspect of preparing and serving food varies greatly between the city population, where the equipment is mass- roduced, and some isolated rural areas, where primitive cutlery and utensils have not yet disappeared. 252 369

Since the canned goods industry produces largely for exportation, the preservation of food is done in individual homes, even in the large cities. For this purpose, several techniques are current: bottling by sterilisation, pickling, salting, drying and smoking, clamping and other types of pit-storage. Rural communities located near water have ice-pits. 251

Among the alcoholic beverages, wine, of which world-famous brands are produced in Hungary, is the most important. Home distilled brandies are [illegible] of apricots, prunes, plums, pears, lees of wine, marc, etc. Beer drinking, along with the use of coffee or tea, is rather limited to urban areas. 273 [272]

Smoking is a widespread habit. The rural population generally prefers the pipe (few of them chew tobacco), but smoking of cigarettes is now spreading from the cities. The typical Hungarian pipe is long-stemmed (about two spans) with a bowl made out of wood or clay. 276

Of course this is just a matter of form. There are young married couples among them. They sleep together. And then the sweethearts sleep together too.

The harvest-gang are eating. Some of us stand about and get acquainted. We tell them about the foremen and overseers, about the rules and customs of the estate. They tell us about their country: about the peasants in their village, about love and murder, about evictions and confiscations. A land-worker lad fell in love with a peasant girl. He spoke to her after church. The girl blushed and ran away. But the peasant boys went for him, and licked him for his cheek at speaking to a peasant girl. He was a sight when they left him lying on the street. Then the peasant girl came back and helped him to his feet. Now she is here with him. We all stare at her. Imagine, a peasant girl marrying a land-worker! Of course she was thrown out of her family. Her father and mother will never speak to her again. But she is young and foolish, and sits happily beside her man, munching bread and onions and enjoying herself so much that we all look at her.

Sometimes we get dwarf-holders* as harvest-gangs. They are almost as poor as we are. They own an acre or two, and have big families. Of course they must hire themselves out to peasants and to estates to make ends meet. Last year we got people from the Eger wine-grape district. There the famous red grape grows from which they make the Eger "ox-blood" wine. Gentlemen in Budapest, while they listen to the gipsies, drink this wine and pay perhaps two *pengœs* a litre for it. But the dwarf-holders could not sell their wine. They had no money for transport, no money for the tariff. You have to pay the tariff if you want to take your wine to the city. Only big people, like peasants and gentlemen-landowners, can afford to sell their wine if there is a bad year. It was a bad year, so these Eger people could not sell their wine.

They had very little to eat. So in the morning they heated some wine and had that for breakfast. Of course with nothing in it—just the sour red wine, heated up. One wants to ease one's bowels in the morning, and tries to fool one's belly that there is something in it. One cannot drink warm water for breakfast.

That was all right. But then the school-teachers started to complain. The children, who also had wine-soup for breakfast on an empty stomach—these people could only afford a chunk of bread once a day—staggered half-drunk to their distant schools. The

* Dwarf-holders are those who possess only an acre or so of land—sometimes less. As this is not enough to support a family, they must hire out their labour.

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527 wine is like having a wedding without music. According
245 to ancient custom, the gathering of the grapes is not serious work: that is, only half of it is serious, its other half is made up of amusement. It is part of the tradition that the work shall be unpaid — and one does not look a gift horse in the mouth. It is like the help volunteered for picking maize and plucking feathers, or for reaping the harvest or helping to build a house in the Szekler country, where all relations, friends and neighbours co-operate and in exchange for a few turns of work receive a few glasses of wine or turns of dancing. Of course the gipsies cannot be missing from the gathering of the grapes. In ancient times they had pipes, later on gipsy players of stirring, undisciplined Hungarian songs. But why have discipline in enjoyment: why use a breake when the cart is going up hill?

[192] In Hungarian the process of gathering the grapes is expressed by one word: *Szüret*. When a Hungarian has an unexpected joy, when he has hopes of a great success, when a vista of unforeseen possibilities opens up before him, surpassing his most daring expectations, he expresses his joy with the one word: *Szüret!*

245 The Hungarian vineyards afford pleasure and gaiety,
● 273 they deserve affection and sacrifices. The volcanic soil of
[134] the Hungarian vineyards is unsurpassed in any other part of the world. It yields the golden coloured «aszu» of Tokaj, which according to a Hungarian saying revives even the dead, the red wine of Eger called «bull's blood», the sweet poison of Badacsony or Somlyó which makes the dumb speak and forces even diplomats to tell the truth! Long experience has ripened the Hungarian proverb: truth is found in wine; «in vino veritas» as our Latin speaking forbears used to say. Wine is the national drink of the Hungarians. Thus does a popular song express this truth:

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Let's go away from here,
We may get a hiding!
No, let's not go
Until the violins are playing!
Bring wine for the Hungarians,
Brandy for the Slovaks,
Beer for the Germans!

The grapes ripen in a dry summer and a long, mild autumn: they take a long time to grow and ripen, and in every part of the country they can boast a different fame and quality. There are as many kinds of wine as there are Hungarian dialects: it has as many colours as Hungarian peasant costumes, it has as many tastes, flavours, bouquets as Hungarian songs or Hungarian tunes. Its effect and strength surprise one like the beauty of Hungarian shepherd carvings or embroideries.

Every peasant vineyard, even if only half an acre in [343] size, has its own cellar built into a hill, before which is a porch with a fireplace. People go there very frequently to sit about, roast bacon, drink a few glasses of wine and smoke. In some places whole villages grow up in the [36] vineyards, called hill-villages. Their laws are even more strict than those of the other villages. And strictest of all are the laws observed during the gathering of the grapes. Those who behaved badly at a «szüret» were in ancient times sent back to the bosom of Abraham: that is to say, they were removed from amongst the living. People were not even allowed to swear in the vineyards. In olden times even justice was stayed at the time of the gathering of the grapes. Though it was never admitted, yet in fact even Mohamed's prohibition of strong drink was ignored during the Turkish occupation, those 250 years during which the Turks came in contact with Hungarian wine, — years which had such a disastrous influence on the advance of Hungarian

245 culture. Faithful agas and beys were carried home on
273 stretchers more than once from the table of hospitable Hungarian soldiers and captains; or perhaps not from the table, but from under the table . . .

245 To-day, as well as in olden times, most weddings
527 are celebrated on new bread and new wine, that is after the grapes have been gathered. Gathering the grapes is the gay closing of the yearly farm work, it is the crowning of labour with grapes ! The saying of a Hungarian ballad :

> She who finds a red grape first
> Will celebrate her wedding in autumn !

indicates merely the usual season in which weddings are held. Small wonder that the young people look forward to the gay days of autumn with an even greater longing than the farmer who has run out of wine. The time for gathering the grapes round the Balaton (Badacsony) and in the part of Terézia, Somlyó, Orsolya and Tokaj begins on the day of Simon and Judas, that is generally in the second half of October. But in 1812 it happened that in consequence of the heavy snow the grapes could not be gathered in that year at all, but only at the end of February in the following year. The new wine thus came too late and the weddings were left over until the following spring . . . When the storks came back ! . . .

The vineyards, which are carefully guarded and are deadly quiet in the late autumn, are seething with life at the time of gathering the grapes. The hills seem to move: coloured patches swarm about on them, songs resound, guns go off. The rattles and whips for frightening birds are now used to frighten the female part of the assembly. In these light-hearted days the guard shoots off all his cartridges, he will have — if he'll be able to buy them — some more next year; to-day is the day of gaiety and

11: Karolyi E-4, 5 (no date) 1931? EC1 Hungary EC1

527 wheat-harvest, the grape-gatherers prepare a huge bouquet of fragrant grapes, which they carry around the village or, when the harvesting is done on an estate, present to the landlord in a quaint ceremony. The presentation or the procession of the grapes is followed by the vintage festival, which is one of the merriest and longest of celebrations.

273 527 Wine is the national drink of the Hungarians, and this is clearly brought to light in the merry vintage song which tells that

> The Slovaks all drink brandy,
> The Germans all drink beer,
> The Hungarians drink wine only,
> The very best, my dear . . .

796 But long before the wine-harvest there are other red-letter days of great importance. On the twenty-sixth of July, St Anna, the mother of the Virgin, is honoured with picturesque Anna Fairs throughout the country. This fair is somewhat akin to the yearly fairs held on the day of the local Patron Saint, in which trinkets, sweets, scarves, toys, kerchiefs, trumpets, rattles, and teasers are sold from stands richly hung with coloured cracknels and beautifully decorated ginger-cakes, baked in the form of a heart, with a tiny mirror inserted in the centre upon which love rhymes are written in coloured sugar glazing, or baked in the form of a mounted Hussar or other favourite figures of Hungarian fantasy.

The fifteenth of August is the Day of the Assumption. It is also the first day of St Stephen's Week, during which the memory of Hungary's first King and Patron Saint is honoured with country-wide celebrations. The great week ends in the striking procession of the Holy Right Hand on the twentieth of August, which is